

## **The Church and The Blessed Hope** **“A Model Church”** **I Thessalonians 1:1-10**

**Introduction** - There is not perfect church! If you find one, don't join ....

Why no perfect churches? Because they are made up of people! Some are closer to God's ideal. In I Thess. 1:7 Paul says, the believers at Thessalonica were *examples* or *models* to all believers of Macedonia.

*Why were they a model church?* Three marks of the model church:

1. An Elect Church - vs. 4
2. An Evangelistic Church - vs. 8
3. An Expectant Church - vs. 10

### I. An Elect Church, vv. 1-4

A little back ground for this letter:

- Paul is the human author. vs. 1
  - The church in Thessalonica was founded by Paul, Silas and Timothy on the second missionary journey. (Acts 17).
  - A.D., when Paul wrote and why Paul wrote.
  - A church was born. vs. 1 “church” in the Greek is “ekklesia”. A called out group or people! (it's not!) It's dual address! One geographical, the other spiritual. vs. 1
  - Jesus equal with God the Father (trinity)
  - The Source of *grace* and *peace*. vs. 1
- 1. The church is a called out community which lives in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.** vs. 1
  - 2. The church was a called out community Paul was thankful and prayerful for.** vs. 2
  - 3. The church is a called out community distinguished by *faith, hope* and *love*.** vs. 3

Paul was thankful for the three eminent Christian graces that were marks of true conversion.

1. **“Work of faith”** vs. 3 ....not saved by(Eph. 2) contrast with James (John 6:28-28) *Past*
2. **“Labor of love”** vs. 3 ....the believer’s motive. *Present*
3. **“Patience of hope”** vs. 3 .... Blessed hope! *Future*

**Two important things about these Christian qualities:**

**1. Each is outgoing.**

- Faith is directed towards God.
- Love towards others.
- Hope towards the future coming of Christ.
- Every Christian is a believer, a lover, and a hoper.

When a person is born again, they find themselves drawn *up* toward God in *faith*, *out* towards others in *love*, and *on* towards the coming of the Lord in *hope*. True conversion redirects our focus in life from self to God and others!

**2. Each, Faith, Love and Hope is productive.**

- Faith works, Eph. 2:10
- Love labors, true love labors....not just emotions
- Hope endures, leads to endurance! It’s patient fortitude in the face of opposition!

It’s a definition of the true Christian!

**4. The church is a community loved and chosen by God.** vs. 4

- Believers are “*the chosen of God!*”
- If you are saved it’s because God chose you!
- A doctrine people have problems with! Why?
- The Bible teaches it! **Illustration** - Abraham and Israel. Eph. 1:4, Jesus said, “ye have not...”
- *Why did God choose us?* vs. 4 “Beloved” *So* His love and grace! It’s *not because!* I Cor. 1:26-29!
- *Knowing* that God has chosen me because of his love and God should foster:
  1. *Assurance*, not presumption.
  2. *Holiness*, not apathy.
  3. *Humility*, not pride.
  4. *Witness*, not lazy selfishness.

Note: The trinity and salvation!

I am not a Calvinist! The Bible also teaches we must “receive the word” (vs. 6) and we must “turn to God” (vs. 9).

The problem is often a person is a church member, but is not one of God’s elect (not truly saved).

Paul knew these people were elect! How? (vs. 3)

- Their work produced faith!
- Their labor prompted by love!
- Their endurance inspired by hope in Jesus Christ!

## II. An Evangelistic Church, vv. 5-8

In the Bible “election” brings responsibility. **Illustration** - God chose Israel to be a light to the other nations. So also the church - election and evangelism go together - it’s God’s means to the end. God wants the whole church to preach the whole gospel to the whole world. John 3:16

### 1. The Gospel came unto them. vs. 5 How?

- A. Not in word only, it was in words. There’s no substitute for the Word of God.
- B. In Power - Romans 1:16, “I am not ashamed”
- C. In the Holy Spirit - Word of God & Spirit of God.

“We must never divorce what God has married, namely *His Word* and *His Spirit*. The Spirit without the word is *weaponless*; the Word without the Spirit is *powerless*.” - John Stott

- D. With deep conviction - “in much assurance” vs. 5 Paul’s preaching was not only powerful in its effect, but confident in its presentation. He was sure of its *truth* and *relevance*.

### 2. The Gospel was received by them. vs. 6 How?

- A. In spite of the suffering it brought. Acts 17
- B. With the joy given by the Holy Spirit. vs. 6 The same spirit who gives power to those who preach the gospel give joy to those who receive it.

**Illustration** - Acts 8:8 - When Philip preached in Samaria - “And there was great joy in that city.” Acts 16:34 - The Philippian jailer brought Paul and Silas into his house. “Rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.”

### 3. The Gospel was spread by them. vv. 7-8

They were a young church, yet they were sharing the gospel! How?

A. By their lives. vs. 7

They were “models.” Be an example of the believer.

B. By their lips. vs. 8

They were both *receivers* of the word and *transmitters* of the word. In verse 8, *sounded out* means, *to sound as a trumpet*.

It is the responsibility and privilege of each believer and each local church to share the Word of God with a lost world.” It’s called the *Great Commission*!

### III. An Expectant Church vv. 9-10

- They were an *elect* church. They turned to God from idols. “*Work of faith.*”
- They were an *evangelistic* church. They served the true and living God. “*Labor of love.*”
- They were an *expectant* church. They waited for his son from Heaven. “*Patience of hope.*”

1. “Ye turned” to God from idols!

- It’s in the aorist - so turned once and for all in a single definite act.
- It’s true conversion.
- We still have idols today!

2. To Serve the living and true God!

- Illustration - In contrast to idols. If you truly turn to God you will serve God!

3. To Wait for his Son from Heaven.

- Working while waiting. We are not to wait in idleness.

The theme of I Thessalonians is the coming again of Jesus Christ! Jesus promised to come again! John 14 & Acts 1. If we really believe, it should affect the way we live. Every chapter ends with a reference to the Lord’s coming and relates it to a practical aspect of Christian living!

1:10 Salvation and Assurance

2:19-20 Soul Winning and Service

3:11-13 Stability in Christian Living

4:13-18 Strength for Sorrow

5:23-24 Sanctification of Life

They believed Christ coming for the church was imminent. Jesus died on the cross and rose in the resurrection to deliver us from wrath!